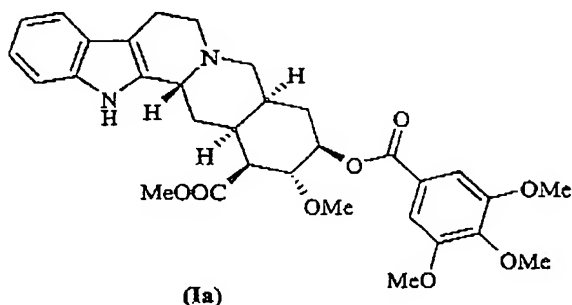


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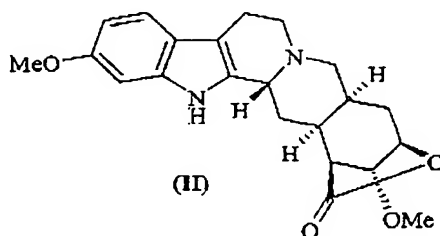
CLAIMS

1. A process for the preparation of deserpidine (**Ia**)

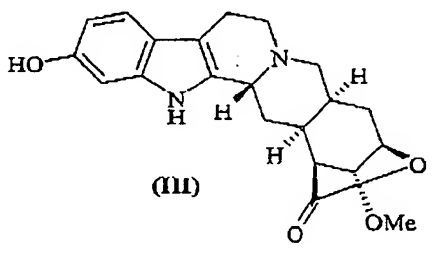


comprising the following steps:

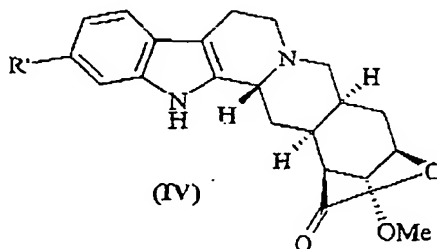
- a) demethylation of reserpic acid lactone (**II**)



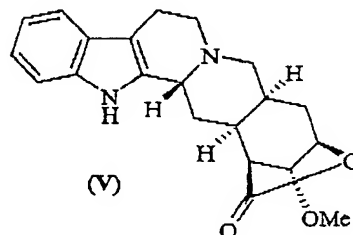
to give 11-O-demethyl reserpic acid lactone (**III**)



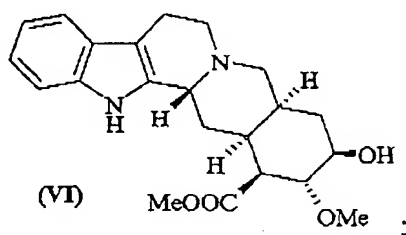
- b) transforming compound (**III**) into a compound of formula (**IV**)



in which R' is a leaving group
and reducing compound (IV) to deserpidic acid lactone (V)



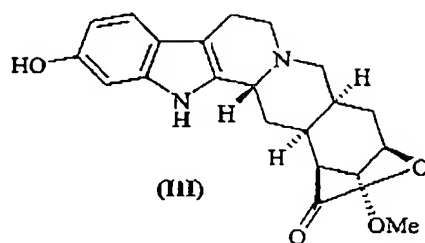
- 5 c) hydrolisis of deserpidic acid lactone (V) to methyl deserpidate (VI)



- d) esterification of methyl deserpidate (VI) with 3,4,5-trimethoxybenzoic acid to give deserpidine (Ia).
- 10 2. The process as claimed in claim 1 in which in compound (IV) the R' group is selected from a sulfonate, an isoureido or a (5-phenyl-tetrazolyl)oxy group.
3. The process as claimed in claim 2 in which the R' group is *p*-toluenesulfonate or methanesulfonate.
- 15 4. The process as claimed in claim 3 in which the R' group is *p*-toluenesulfonate.
5. The process as claimed in claim 4 in which the reduction of compound (IV) is carried out with nickel Raney.
6. The process as claimed in claim 2 in which the R' group is an isoureido group.
- 20 7. The process as claimed in claim 6 in which the reduction of compound (IV) is carried out with palladium on charcoal.

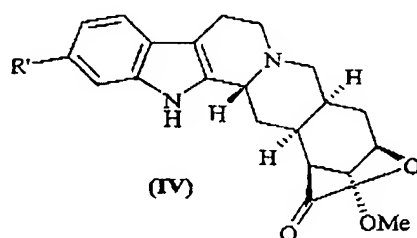
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8. The compound of formula (III)



9. A compound of formula (IV)

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in which R' is *p*-toluenesulfonate.